

Totally Teen Women: 50 Monologues

by Deborah Karczewski

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INTRODUCTION

Totally Teen Women: 50 Monologues provides for high school women acting experiences that elicit the gamut of emotions. Simultaneously, these pieces not only fit the criterion of most auditions by being 2-5 minutes in performance length, but they are also complete short stories written for teens.

Having taught drama for many years, I have empathized with the frustrations of teen actresses. Most books of monologues offer excerpts that are unappealing or inappropriate for young women. The majority of fine roles have either been written for males or for mature women. The few truly exciting, female teen monologues have been hackneyed so often that drama coaches, judges, and auditioners are sick of them. Many good teen parts are in the form of scenes that cannot stand alone as soliloquies. Others contain word choices that make neophyte actresses and their parents uncomfortable. Even more discouraging is the fact that many monologues feel fragmented. Without having the benefit of play synopses, background information, or character descriptions, the monologues seem like disconnected bits of theater. Although some books of monologues give small prologues to the pieces chosen, this information aids the actress but not the audience. Most disconcerting of all is that the scripts available sound foreign to many young women. The speech patterns and subject matter are not those to which a modern teenager can relate.

Totally Teen Women is a medley of monologues for teen women about the the experiences that they know. Each piece could have happened to one of their friends. Every selection provides a variety of intense emotions, each in the language that teens speak. The stylistic genre of the monologues are as varied as the characterizations presented. *Totally Teen Women* includes tragedies, comedies, farces, horror stories and more. The characters speaking are deep, insightful, pained, ditsy, bright, malicious etc. Each piece is a mini-play, a short story on its own, with a beginning, middle, and end. Even though the monologue can be completed in brief minutes, its speaker is three-dimensional, its content evolves thoroughly, and its ending provides the impact required for a quick close of the curtain, the black of the lights, or the fade of the camera.

Totally Teen Women is about the time in a woman's life that is the most volatile, the most profound: her teen years. It is an exercise in the full range of emotional responses. It is a volume of ready-made audition pieces. It is a psychological study of young minds. It is a compilation of short stories, complete with figurative language and literary style. This book is for the drama coach, the English teacher, the psychology student, the actress, the avid reader, for anyone who enjoys living vicariously through peak moments in the lives of 50 teen women, desperately trying to communicate their ideas, share their feelings.

- Deborah Karczewski

DEDICATED TO JOE AND SABRINA

1. Freak

I don't know what I'm supposed to feel. Am I supposed to feel guilty because I didn't see this coming? Maybe I'm supposed to fall apart because I'll never see you again. Part of me just wants to tell you off for doing this to all of us.

I feel that everyone is watching me to analyze my reaction. I'm some kind of a crawly bug under a microscope, and they're the scientists watching me make a move so that they can poke me with a needle or drop a solution on my head or just record everything down in some black ledger so that they can compare my data with the next little bug's. Part of me wants to behave the way they want me to, but I don't know what they expect. Tell me how to feel and I'll feel it.

Do you want me to cry? Well, fine, then you must be happy because that's all I've been doing, and I don't even know why. My mom keeps hugging me and asking me if I'm all right. I don't know! Am I? Am I all right? I thought you were all right. You told me you were. You told me that they didn't matter because I was your family. You said that you didn't care what happened at home any more because when we were in college, it'd just be the two of us ... And you insisted that Steve was a big jerk anyway and that you were better off without him. You did! You sat there and swore that all we needed was each other. No guy was that important. It was us - that's what mattered - us. Well, where's the "us" now, Michelle, huh? Where are "we" now? It's just me ... and I'm all alone. It's just me.

What were you? Some kind of a freak? I mean, how could you sit there and tell me that everything was fine and then ... How could you do that? You said that you could tell me anything! Well, you sure left something out, you freak! You liar! You ... you big ... I hate you! I wish we had never been friends! I wish your parents never had you!

Oh, yeah! You sure got your parents, you freak! You sure paid them back for having you ... for giving birth to you ... for raising you ... You sure got them all right. Your mom couldn't even stand up at the funeral, you freak. And it didn't have anything to do with the booze, either. It was because she was such a wreck. You meant everything to her, only you were too big a freak to see it. And your dad, he just stood there like a numbed statue, like he was in shock. And everyone from school was there filing past them, not knowing what to say. What could they say? What could I say? "Gee, sorry. Michelle was my best friend and I'm sorry she killed herself. Gee, sorry."

Why Michelle? Why? Why couldn't you have told me the truth? I would have been there for you. I would have helped you. I swear I would have ... Did you try to tell me? Did I miss something? I've been asking myself that over and over. I've replayed our last few conversations in my mind like that memo toy we had so much fun with. Do you remember? You pushed the button and it repeated anything you said like someone who had just breathed in helium? Like some Munchkin from *The Wizard Of Oz*? Well, I keep playing your words over and over ... Honestly, Michelle, I can't find the hidden message. I can't find the clue. I never knew. I must be some kind of an idiot. I must be the biggest moron on the face of the earth ...

I never knew. I never knew, you freak ... you liar ... you ... my friend ... my best friend ... my best, best friend.

2. In The Thpotlight

(GILDA is unaware of her severe lisp. The monologue is written to show what Gilda thinks she is saying; however, the actress playing Gilda should actually lisp (th) the underlined letters.)

Excuse me, Principal Sampler. May I please speak to you for a brief moment? Hi ... You don't really know me ... My name is Gilda Stern. I'm a sophomore. I was wondering if you would do something about that ... that Mrs. Aspen. Yes, well, the problem is ... I don't think she was ... well ... totally objective when casting the school production of *Macbeth*.

Yes, sir, I have talked to her about it, but I don't think that matters to her. I honestly believe that she's prejudiced. Yes, I do, Mr. Sampler. She casts the same girls in every play every year. This is the fourth time I've tried out, and it's the fourth rejection. When I confronted Mrs. Aspen, she just mumbled something about taking Public Speaking, but I know the truth. She's prejudiced! She hates smart, pretty girls.

It's so obvious. I can't help that I got seven hundreds on my S. A. T.'s! Just because I'm intelligent doesn't mean that I'm too good for the plays! I mean, "A rose by any other name would smill as sweet," if you know what I mean. And I know that it drives her nuts that I'm ... well ... sexy. But looks shouldn't have anything to do with it. Her job is to pick the best person for the part, isn't it?

Mr. Sampler, I was so prepared. I researched the part of Lady Macbeth all weekend. At the audition when I yelled, "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" I was one with the character. I could feel Lady Macbeth. But did I even make call-backs? No, of course not. That Mrs. Aspen had made up her mind long before I wasted my time going up on that stage.

Theater is my life, Mr. Sampler. I've known I wanted to be an actress since I was a little girl. When I first saw Marlon Brando yelling, "Stella!" in *Streetcar Named Desire*, I was in love. I knew that I had that kind of passion in *me*, too! I knew that I had so much emotion in me ... so much to share. I knew that my place in life was on the stage. Even my mother says that I was born to be in the spotlight!

Mr. Sampler, you've got to help me. Help me! "The quality of mercy is not strained!" I need to be Lady Macbeth. I understand her like no one else ever could. Lady Macbeth is like my soul sister. I've tried every way that I know to get that part. You're my last resort. Please, help me. I know that you don't know me, but it's like my hero, Blanche Dubois, once said, "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."

3. Face It

Listen. It's not like I care. I just thought that if we had this little - what should I call it? - this little discussion, that I might be able to save you some ... embarrassment, that's all. But if you're not interested ... Well, I just thought that you might appreciate a little friendly advice.

Oh, there's nothing between him and me any more. I dropped his sorry butt a couple of weeks ago. He was getting too ... too ... smothering. I felt like he was peanut butter, and he was trying to smear himself all over my life. I couldn't go anywhere without seeing him staring at me, smiling like a hungry kitten. Every day there would be some sort of drippy, sweetsy note poked into the slats of my locker. "I think about you all of the time. You make me feel so special. I'm so lucky to be a part of your life." I mean, eeeeeooooooooo. How sappy can you get? And whenever I said that I had too much homework to do, like an essay for example, he'd offer to type it for me. Or if I used the excuse that I wasn't feeling very well, he'd run to the corner deli and bring me back a cup of soup. I couldn't peel him off of me. Remember when you were a kid and all the kids would spread that white glue all over their hands and make a really thin layer? Remember after you let it dry, then you'd try to peel it off in one unbroken piece like a translucent glove? Well, he was like that glue ... all skin-tight and dry ... all wrinkly and adhesive.

So, it's fine that you've been sitting with him in the cafeteria. It's not like I have any claim on the jerk. He can eat with anybody he wants. He can eat with a stinking bum if that's what he prefers. Not that there's any comparison, if you get my drift. No insult intended.

No, in fact, you're so much better than he is. That's why I thought I'd try and save you some grief. You see, I know better than anyone the kind of girl he likes, and as cute as you are, you are not really his type. He tends to go for a fuller figure and someone who dresses ... well ... in a more conservative manner. Frankly, I think you look perfect, and any guy would be nuts not to fall madly in love with you. But, I know his tastes. I would hate for you to read him the wrong way and get your hopes up.

Believe me, this is for your own good. There's nothing worse than getting all excited about someone ... spending all of your energy thinking about him ... and then looking like a total loser when he's not interested. So, face it, he's a waste of your time.

End of Freeview

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